

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 10154

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, JA

SUBJ: SOHYO CONVENTION

SUMMARY: SOHYO'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY CONVENTION AGAIN REAFFIRMED FEDERATION'S EXCLUSIVE ELECTROAL SUPPORT OF SOCIALISTS AND REJECTED COMMUNIST CALL FOR "POPULAR FRONT." DEBATE OTHERWISE CENTERED ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY ON JAPAN'S DOMESTIC ECONOMIC TROUBLES AND CONSPICUOUSLY IGNORED FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES INCLUDING FORTHCOMING MIKI VISIT TO US. END SUMMARY.

1. SOHYO'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY CONVENTION, MEETING IN TOKYO JULY 21-24, AGAIN REJECTED EFFORT BY COMMUNIST DOMINATED UNIONS TO END SOHYO'S EXCLUSIVE SUPPORT AND FUNDING OF SOCIALIST (JSP) CANDIDATES IN ELECTIONS. VIRTUALLY ALL MAJOR FEDERATIONS, INCLUDING TEACHERS (NIKKYOSO), RAILROAD (KOKURO), POSTAL (ZENTEI), COMMUNICATIONS (ZENDENTSU) AND STEELWORKERS (TEKKOROREN), VOTED AGAINST PROPOSAL CALLING FOR "FREEDOM OF POLITICAL PARTY CHOICE" SPONSORED BY DAY WORKERS (ZENNICHIJIRO) AND 18 OTHER MINOR SOHYO AFFILIATES. WHILE NOT SUPPORTING COMMUNIST RESOLUTION, KOMEITO CHAIRMAN TAKEIRI (AN INVITED GUEST) AND CHEMICAL WORKERS CHAIRMAN (EX SOHYO PRESIDENT) OTA INDEPENDENTLY URGED SOHYO SUPPORT OF ALL OPPOSITION PARTIES. OTA AGAIN PLAYED THE MAVERICK (A ROLE WHICH REPORTEDLY EARNS HIM LARGE SUMS FROM THE MEDIA) BY ARGUING THAT SOCIALISTS ACTUALLY WOULD BENEFIT FROM LOSS OF SOHYO SECURITY BLANKET SINCE THEY WOULD BE FORCED TO
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CULTIVATE OTHER SECTORS OF THE ELECTORATE.

2. CONVENTION VIRTUALLY IGNORED FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES. ONLY MAJOR EXCEPTIONS WERE COMMUNIST PARTY (JSP) VICE CHAIRMAN

SENAGA'S VITRIOLIC ATTACK ON "US IMPERIALISM" AND SOHYO SEC GEN OHKI'S CRITICISM OF JSP'S SIGNING OF "ANTI-HEGEMONY" COMMUNIQUE IN PEKING. SENAGA (ANOTHER INVITED GUEST) CHARGED THAT USG AND "REACTIONARY MIKI REGIME," TO COMPENSATE FOR SETBACKS IN INDOCHINA, WERE REDOUBLING THEIR EFFORTS TO MILITARIZE AND NUCLEARIZE JAPAN. SENAGA ALSO CALLED ON SOHYO TO CONDEMN MIKI-FORD SUMMIT MEETING (COMMENT: HIS APPEAL WAS IGNORED). OHKI CRITICIZED JSP CHAIRMAN NARITA FOR REFUSING TO HEED SOHYO PLEAS NOT TO TRAVEL TOPRC IN MIDST OF LABOR STRUGGLE AND FOR AGREEING IN PEKING TO CONDEMN "HEGEMONY" IN ASIA WITHOUT FIRST CONSULTING WITH JSP EXEC BOARD.

3. FRICTION BETWEEN JSP AND JCP VERY APPARENT. SENAGA LASHED OUT AT JSP (ALTHOUGH NOT BY NAME) FOR COLLABORATING WITH LDP IN PASSAGE OF "ANTI-DEMOCRATIC" LEGISLATION (I.E. ELECTROAL LAW REVISION) AT RECENTLY CONCLUDED DIET SESSION. SOHYO SEC GEN OHKI IN TURN INDIRECTLY CRITICIZED JCP FOR INTERVENING IN SOHYO'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS. COMMENT: CONVENTION DELEGATE TOLD LABATT THAT JJSP-JCP STEPPING UP CRITICISM OF EACH OTHER IN ANTICIPATION OF YEAR-END GENERAL ELECTION IN WHICH BOTH PARTIES WILL BE COMPETING FOR VOTES FROM SAME SECTORS OF ELECTORATE.).

4. MOST CONVENTION DEBATE CENTERED ON DOMESTIC ECONOMY SOHYO PRES ICHIKAWA APOLOGIZED FOR SOHYO ACCEPTANCE OF "UNSATISFACTORY" 15 PERCENT WAGE INCREASE THIS SPRING IN SPITE OF EARLY LEADERSHIP PROMISES TO GAIN AT LEAST 25 PERCENT RAISE FOR MEMBERSHIP. ICHIKAWA CLAIMED HE CONSIDERED RESIGNING TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR POOR LEADERSHIP OF SPRING STRUGGLE BUT FINALLY ACCEDED TO SOHYO EXEC COUNCIL REQUEST THAT HE NOT LEAVE OFFICE IN MIDDLE OF HIS TERM (COMMENT: LABOR MIN OFFICIAL TOLD EMBOFF THAT SOHYO EXEC BOARD ANNOYED BY ICHIKAWA'S FREQUENT THREATS TO RESIGN WHICH THEY REGARD AS MANUEVERS INTENDED TO GAIN THEIR PUBLIC ENDORSEMENT OF HIS ADMITTEDLY WEAK LEADERSHIP). WHILE ICHIKAWA, CONTRIBUTED TO MODERATE TONE OF CONVENTION BY URGING OTHER LABOR FEDERATIONS TO JOIN SOHYO IN YEAR-ROUND EFFORT TO SECURE DIET CONFIDENTIAL

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PASSAGE OF LONG STALLED LEGISLATION OF INTEREST TO ORGANIZED LABOR, CONVENTION UNABLE TO REACH DECISION ON HOW TO CONDUCT MORE SUCCESSFUL BARGAINING EFFORT NEXT YEAR.

5. COMMENT: PUBLIC SPARRING BETWEEN JSP AND JCP SUPPORTERS AT CONVENTION FURTHER PROOF THAT OPPOSITION PARTIES EXPECT AND ARE POSITIONING THEMSELVES FOR LOWER HOUSE ELECTION LATER THIS YEAR.
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